

Commissioner for Patents
United States Patent Application No. 10/802,326

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

DRAWINGS

The drawings were objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a) on the grounds that the drawings failed to show the “spanner nuts” and the “wing nuts” claimed in claims 5 and 6. Applicant respectfully disagrees. As defined in paragraph [0035], last sentence, of the application as filed: “The expression “threaded union” shall denote any threaded connection such as a nut, sometimes also referred to as a wing-nut, spanner nut, or hammer unions.” The threaded unions are clearly shown in FIGs. 4-15 and 17-20. The requirements of 37 CFR 1.83(a) are therefore clearly met. Nonetheless, to facilitate prosecution of the present application, claims 5 and 6 are cancelled and the objection is traversed.

The drawings were objected to under 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because certain reference characters were not mentioned in the description. Paragraphs [0057], [0058], [0073] and [0084] are amended to add the reference numbers to the description and the objection is traversed. No new matter has been added.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office Action rejected claims 1-4 and 7-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 1,988,442 to Begg. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Begg teaches an oil well casing head in which the packing is entirely enclosed within the head when assembled, yet which can be adjusted externally without disassembling any part of the head or the flow lines connected thereto (page 1, col. 1, lines 15-20). A base member is connected to an upper member by a pipe coupling (page 1, col. 1, lines 52-54). Detachably secured to the [base] member 13 preferably by screw threads is

Commissioner for Patents
United States Patent Application No. 10/802,326

a bonnet 35 in which is threaded a plurality of set screws 36 that engage a lateral flange 37 formed on the base portion of member 14. The bonnet and set screws provide means for connecting the two members together ... (page 1, col. 2, lines 43-50). The bonnet 35 may be manually turned on the threads formed on the base member (page 2, col. 1, lines 1-2). The upper end of the fitting 49 is externally threaded as indicated at 58 for connection with the usual Christmas tree or flow lines (page 2, col. 1, lines 31-33).

It is therefore clear that Begg fails to meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 102 for at least the reason that Beggs neither teaches nor suggests the flanged connection at the top end of the tubing head spool. Nonetheless, claim 1 is amended to improve clarity. Claims 2 and 10-12 are cancelled. The rejection of claims 1-4 and 7-12 is thereby traversed.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action rejected claim 5 as unpatentable over Begg in view of Scott. It should be noted that the spanner nut 80 taught by Scott is a component of a test tree control valve, and not a component of a hybrid wellhead system as claimed in claim 5. Nonetheless, claim 5 is cancelled without prejudice and the rejection is traversed.

The Office Action rejected claim 6 as unpatentable over Begg in view of Brisco. It should be noted that the wing nut 80 taught by Brisco is a component of a circulating nipple for setting well casing, and not a component of a hybrid wellhead system as claimed in claim 6. Nonetheless, claim 6 is cancelled without prejudice and the rejection is traversed.

The Office Action rejected claims 18-20 as unpatentable over Begg in view of co-applicant Dallas' United States patent 6,626,245. Dallas teaches a blowout preventer protector for use in well stimulation operations. The blowout preventer protector is inserted through blowout preventers after the wellhead is removed. Dallas does not teach a

Commissioner for Patents
United States Patent Application No. 10/802,326

tubing head spool, much less a tubing head spool rated for a pressure of 10,000-15,000 PSI, and it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn. In any event, the rejection of claims 18-20 is traversed in view of the amendment to claim 1.

The Office Action rejected claims 21-27 as unpatentable over Begg in view of Bigbie et al. Applicant assumes that the rejection of claims 22-27 was intended.

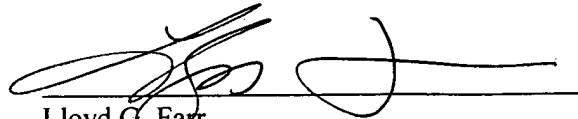
Claim 22 is amended to clearly distinguish over the teachings of Begg and Bigbie, and the rejection of claims 22-27 is traversed.

New claims 29-38 are added to claim subject matter described in the application as filed. New claims 29-38 clearly distinguish over all prior art made of record.

In view of the above-noted amendments to the description and the claims, this application is now considered to be in a condition for immediate allowance. Favorable reconsideration and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance are therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

NELSON MULLINS RILEY
& SCARBOROUGH, L.L.P.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lloyd G. Farr', is written over a horizontal line.

Lloyd G. Farr
Registration No. 38,446

1320 Main Street
Columbia, SC 29201
(404) 817-6165
Fax (803) 255-9831